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LETTER DATED 30 AUGUST 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a letter dated 30 August 1998 from Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, which refers to the grave facts that have recently been revealed concerning the control which the United States exercises over the Special Commission established by the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 9 (b) (i) of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), including over its schedule and methods of work. In his letter, the Deputy Prime Minister urges the Security Council to conduct a serious investigation into the above-mentioned facts, to remedy the situation prevailing within the Special Commission so that the latter may become an impartial international body, in accordance with the requests formulated by Iraq in a communiqué issued by its leadership on 5 August 1998 and, finally, to put an end to the suffering resulting from the unjust embargo imposed on Iraq.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* Reissued for technical reasons.

Annex

Letter dated 30 August 1998 from the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

The resignation of Mr. Scott Ritter and information appearing in the media have confirmed serious facts which Iraq had stressed both in official letters to the Security Council and in its statements, as well as during consultations it held with members of the Council. These facts are as follows:

1. The Special Commission is controlled by the United States, which acts in coordination and in collaboration with the United Kingdom. In fact, it is the United States which decides on the Commission's agenda and even on its working methods. Information recently published concerning the coordination between the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, Richard Butler, and the United States Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, the existence of which Ms. Albright herself acknowledged in an article she wrote for The New York Times, published on 17 August 1998, and the fact that Mr. Butler and certain members of the Special Commission act in coordination with United States intelligence services and certain services of the State Department, constitute proof positive of this fact, which Iraq has been stressing for some time now and concerning which it has issued repeated warnings, calling upon both you and the Security Council to rectify the situation so that the Special Commission may be an impartial and fair international body rather than an instrument of the United States. It is to be regretted that these requests to rectify the situation which Iraq has been making for years have not met with the necessary understanding and support on the part of the Security Council. The attempts made in recent months to appoint advisers to the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission from among nationals of two countries which are permanent members of the Security Council have not helped to bring about genuine balance in the composition of the Special Commission.

2. Mr. Ritter's claims that the United States pressured the Special Commission to reduce its intrusive inspections is a travesty of the facts. However, these statements together with certain articles published in the United States press demonstrate very clearly that the United States has coordinated with the Special Commission the timing of certain inspections in order to suit its plans and its military and diplomatic preparations, thereby putting the Council, which is the competent authority in the matter, in a completely ridiculous position.

By way of correction and in order to give you and the Security Council a clear picture of the number of inspections carried out during the period following the crises of November 1997 and 20 July 1998, I should point out that the number of inspections totalled 446 and that the list of the activities carried out by the Commission is as follows:

193 inspections in the area of missiles

28 inspections in the area of chemical weapons

192 inspections in the area of biological weapons

16 inspections focusing on imports and exports and

17 inspections carried out in the context of the Special Group.

3. The language used by Mr. Scott Ritter in his letter of resignation and the statements he has made all provide indisputable confirmation that the claims that the Special Commission is a body under the authority of the Security Council are only a smokescreen. If they were true, how could an inspector who has worked with the Special Commission since 1991 and has held positions of leadership therein have so arrogantly attacked the superior body to which he was answerable and have attacked the Secretary-General of the United Nations? How could he, an officer who is perfectly well aware of the rules of discipline, have acted thus?

The explanation for such behaviour is clear. In fact, the clique which has controlled the Special Commission these many years was on the point of being uncovered. Scott Ritter therefore quit and launched his attacks in order to frustrate the efforts under way to expose the lies proffered by the Special Commission regarding the disarmament issues and the measures taken by Iraq. It should be noted in this connection that far from reprimanding Scott Ritter for the rude words he used against the Security Council and the Secretary-General, the Executive Chairman, on the contrary, congratulated him.

As for the fallacious nature of the accusations made by Scott Ritter regarding the so-called concealment of weapons in Iraq, we wish to point out that between 1991 and the date of the most recent inspection headed by him in 1998, he participated in 28 inspection teams, headed 13 of them and carried out a total of 475 inspections. We challenge him and the Special Commission to provide the slightest shred of evidence to substantiate the truth of his claims regarding the concealment of prohibited weapons, components of such weapons and related documents. It will be recalled in this connection that the sites which he inspected included premises belonging to the Republican Guard, the Special Guard, the special security services, intelligence services and the Ministry of Defence as well as other sensitive sites.

4. Mr. Scott Ritter's letter raises questions about the methodology followed by the Special Commission. While accusing the Security Council of having illusions about the work of the Special Commission, he indicates that the Commission "has good reason to believe that there are significant numbers of proscribed weapons and related components ... unaccounted for in Iraq today". He accuses the Council of having illusions when it tries to deal with the concrete work completed by the Commission over seven years, yet he takes the liberty of considering that "reason to believe that there are ... proscribed weapons" constitutes a basis for the Commission's activities and inspection methodology.

It goes without saying that Mr. Scott Ritter is dealing not in concrete evidence or facts, but in false hypotheses.

5. Mr. Ritter's letter contains a clear incitement against Iraq, in utter disregard of the rules applicable to officials of international organizations, which do not allow them to make statements against a Member State or to make public statements concerning their functions. In this connection, we note that Mr. Ritter's position does not represent a unique case, but has a number of precedents: other experts have made statements in the past about their activities within the Special Commission, and no action was taken against them. This was true, for example, in the case of David Kay, a United States national, and Terence Taylor, a United Kingdom national, and even in the case of the Deputy Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, Mr. Duelfer, who, together with a group of experts from the Commission, appeared on the programme "Impact" broadcast by CNN on 2 March 1998, in order to create a climate of fear about the alleged capacities of Iraq's biological programme at the time of the presidential sites crisis, which was wholly fabricated by the Special Commission.

6. Among the facts that have recently come to light is the coordination which exists between the Special Commission and Israel. Iraq was aware of such coordination and had repeatedly drawn attention to it. We wish to ask you and the Council how you could have allowed an organ under the Security Council's authority to examine issues concerning Iraq in coordination with one of the parties, namely, Israel. In addition, the Council is required to pursue the implementation of paragraph 14 of its resolution 687 (1991), adopted under Chapter VII, in the same way that it pursues the implementation of paragraphs 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 of that resolution. According to the first-mentioned paragraph, Israel's weapons of mass destruction must be eliminated by making the entire Middle East region a zone free from such weapons. Would you and the Council agree to allow an organ under the Council's authority and operating on behalf of the United Nations to act in coordination with Israel against Iraq, while doing nothing to ensure the implementation of paragraph 14 of the Council's resolution?

Iraq demands that the Security Council initiate a serious investigation of all these facts and correct the situation within the Special Commission so that the latter may be an impartial international body and not an intelligence service of one State that is a Council member, as demanded in the communiqué issued by the Iraqi leadership on 5 August 1998.

We have always maintained that, were the Special Commission a neutral and impartial international body, it would have informed the Security Council long ago that its task under resolution 687 (1991), section C, had been completed. Given the fact that the International Atomic Energy Agency has long since completed its task under that resolution, the Council should, out of respect for its own resolution and in the interest of justice and equity, put an end to the injustice being perpetrated against Iraq and implement paragraph 22 of resolution 687 (1991). This has not happened, however, because the body entrusted with the technical implementation of the Council's resolution is neither neutral nor impartial, and because the United States of America exercises arbitrary power within the Council and is preventing it from recognizing the facts.

The Security Council is called upon to put an end to this farce being staged under cover of the United Nations and the Security Council and to put an end to the tragedy caused by the unjust embargo imposed on Iraq.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister